



Contact:

Margaret Anne Tockarszewsky, Executive Director, New Haven Museum

203-562-4183, ext. 20, [matockarszewsky@newhavenmuseum.org](mailto:matockarszewsky@newhavenmuseum.org)

Julie Winkel, Media Specialist,

203-815-0800, [jwinkel@live.com](mailto:jwinkel@live.com)

**President Monroe to Tweet About, Return to New Haven  
Arrives June 3**

New Haven, Conn. (June 1, 2017) –James Monroe will return to New Haven 200 years after his original visit—not in human or spectral form, but in a special, travelling exhibit: “In the Spirit of the People: James Monroe's 1817 Tour of the Northern States.” Never one to fall behind in fashion, Monroe will be tweeting about his experience once he arrives in the Elm City. Though he is new to Twitter, his messages are expected to be relatively erudite. The commemorative exhibit will open at the New Haven Museum on June 3, and remain on view through June 24, 2017. Monroe’s tweets are available here: <https://twitter.com/PresMonroe>

Monroe became the fifth president of the United States in March, 1817. Three months later he embarked on a 15-week tour of the northern states, traveling up the east coast from Washington, DC to Portland, Maine; west to Detroit; and back to Washington via Ohio, western Pennsylvania, and Maryland, totaling some 2,000 miles. Having served as President Madison’s Secretary of State during the War of 1812 - and simultaneously for several months as Secretary of War - Monroe was keenly aware of the vulnerability of the country’s coastal fortifications. Monroe visited New Haven June 20-22, 1817, visiting the large Eli Whitney arms manufacturing facility.

Modern-day presidents are readily recognizable by almost every American. This was not true 200 years ago. Monroe's predecessors rarely traveled, and there was, of course, no electronic media continually broadcasting the president's image or the sound of his voice. Monroe's tour therefore created a national sensation. Americans came out by the thousands, thrilled by the opportunity to see the president, and newspapers across the country gave day-by-day accounts of his progress. Political differences were forgotten as Americans of both parties joined together in grand celebrations marked by parades, speeches, dinners, balls, receptions, and concerts. A Boston newspaper coined the phrase "Era of Good Feelings" to describe the national unity created by Monroe's tour. The term became the catch-phrase of his presidency.

Monroe's two terms in the White House (1817-1825) capped a public service career that included combat service in the Revolutionary War; state and federal legislative offices; the governorship of Virginia; diplomatic missions to France, Great Britain, and Spain; and stints as secretary of state and secretary of war. As a special U.S. envoy to France in 1803, he played a decisive role in negotiating the Louisiana Purchase Treaty. During his presidency, Monroe signed the Missouri Compromise to deal with the growing sectional divide over slavery (1820); granted diplomatic recognition to emerging South American Republics (1823-24); and issued the Monroe Doctrine, declaring the western hemisphere closed to further European colonization (message to Congress, 1823). He capitalized upon the success of his 1817 northern tour by visiting the Chesapeake region in 1818 and the southern states in 1819.

"In the Spirit of the People" consists of 10 full-color vinyl banners containing images, quotations, and captions to present a history of the northern tour and convey a sense of the exuberance it generated. The first three banners introduce viewers to James Monroe and offer an overall summary of the tour. The next six banners focus on specific locations that Monroe visited, with one banner dedicated to each. The final banner offers interactive educational links as well as credits for the exhibit's sponsorship and preparation.

The exhibit is a joint project of The James Monroe Museum and The Papers of James Monroe, both of which are administered by the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The museum, founded in 1927 by Monroe descendants, is a National Historic

Landmark housing the largest single collection of artifacts and archives related to the fifth president. The Papers of James Monroe is a publication project that has produced six volumes to date of selected official and personal correspondence pertaining to Monroe's long career in public service. The University of Mary Washington is a public university in Virginia that focuses on undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences. Signature degree programs include a major in historic preservation and minor in museum studies, both of which emphasize hands-on learning. Students in the university's museum studies program worked on all aspects of "In the Spirit of the People," from research and image acquisition to copy writing and graphic design. For more information visit: [www.jamesmonroemuseum.org/exhibitions/monroe-1817-tour](http://www.jamesmonroemuseum.org/exhibitions/monroe-1817-tour).

### **About the New Haven Museum**

The New Haven Museum has been collecting, preserving and interpreting the history and heritage of Greater New Haven since its inception as the New Haven Colony Historical Society in 1862. Located in downtown New Haven at 114 Whitney Avenue, the Museum brings more than 375 years of New Haven history to life through its collections, exhibitions, programs and outreach. For more information visit [www.newhavenmuseum.org](http://www.newhavenmuseum.org) or [Facebook.com/NewHavenMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/NewHavenMuseum) or call 203-562-4183.

###